

## **LIFELINE CREDIT PROGRAM**

### **48:2-29.15 Establishment of Lifeline Credit Program**

The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services shall administer a program which shall be known as the "Lifeline Credit Program."

### **48:2-29.16 Eligibility for lifeline credit program; schedule of eligible customers**

Any residential electric or gas customer who on July 1 of any year or at any time during the succeeding six months is: a. enrolled in, found eligible for, or, except for the provisions of section 4 of P.L.1975, c. 194 (C. 30:4D- 23), would be eligible for benefits under the program of "Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled," established pursuant to P.L.1975, c. 194 (C. 30:4D-20 et seq.), as amended and supplemented; or b. receiving or is eligible to receive benefits under the program of Supplemental Security Income (P.L.1973, c. 256, C. 44:7-85 et seq.); or c. receiving disability benefits pursuant to the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 416(i)) and meets the income and residency requirements of the "Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled" program, shall be eligible for the "Lifeline Credit Program" established by this act. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services shall establish a schedule of eligible customers who meet such qualifications.

### **48:2-29.17 Credit against electric or gas utility bills**

The "Lifeline Credit Program" shall consist of an annual credit against the electric or gas utility bill of each eligible residential electric or gas customer at his principal residence. Such credit shall be applied to the electric or gas utility bills of such customer as soon as may be practicable, but in no case later than the bills issued in October of each year or as soon thereafter as eligibility is determined, and shall be applied to each subsequent utility bill after the first until the full amount of the credit is exhausted. No household shall receive more than one annual credit. In the event that electric and gas are provided to the same customer by the same utility, the total annual credit shall be applied to the combined bills from such utility. In the event that electric and gas are provided to the same customer by two separate utilities, half of the total annual credit shall be applied to the bills from each such utility. The annual credit shall be \$200.00. Subject to the availability of appropriations, the level of credit shall be increased to \$225.00 beginning in October, 1984.

### **48:2-29.18 State payments to utilities for amount of credit; schedule; return of payments for unused credit; special state utility supplement to supplementary security income program**

Upon certification by the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, the State Treasurer shall pay to each electric and gas utility the amount

of the credit provided for each eligible residential customer served by such utility. The payments shall be made pursuant to a schedule approved by the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting and payments made for unused credit shall be returned to the Casino Revenue Fund pursuant to a plan approved by him. For eligible residential customers receiving benefits pursuant to the program of Supplemental Security Income under P.L.1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.), the credit shall consist of a special State utility supplement to the Supplemental Security Income program and shall be made in 12 monthly installments. If, at the end of a year, a person eligible for the special State utility supplement has not received the full credit for that year, a payment for the balance thereof, shall, upon certification by the commissioner, be issued by the State Treasurer. This special State utility supplement shall be in addition to existing supplementary payments which have been or may be authorized and made pursuant to P.L.1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.).

**48:2-29.19 Rules and regulations; services of state departments, boards, etc.**

- a. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services is authorized to promulgate, pursuant to law, such rules and regulations as he may deem necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.
- b. The commissioner shall be entitled to call upon the assistance, or contract for the services, of any State department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

**48:2-29.20 Notice of lifeline credit program**

The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services is authorized to direct each electric and gas utility to inform each eligible residential customer of the "Lifeline Credit Program" by separate notice. The commissioner shall approve the content of any such notice. Prior to issuing any such direction to a utility, and prior to approving any such notice, the commissioner shall consult with the President of the Board of Public Utilities.

**48:2-29.21 Annual report on lifeline credit program**

The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services shall submit a report on the "Lifeline Credit Program" to the Legislature on August 15, 1981, and annually thereafter. Such report shall include, but shall not be limited to, a summary of the implementation of the program, a study of its impact, any recommendations for its revision, and an estimate of the practicability and feasibility of expanding the program to include other needy residential electric and gas utility customers. The report shall also include an examination of alternative revenue sources to fund such a program.

**48:2-29.22 Transfer of responsibility for administration, powers and duties from board of public utilities to commissioner of department of human services**

The responsibility for the administration of the "Lifeline Credit Program" and all powers and duties in connection therewith is transferred from the Board of Public Utilities to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services. The personnel, records, files, equipment, books, appropriations, grants and other moneys of the "Lifeline Credit Program" are transferred from the Board of Public Utilities in the Department of Energy to the Department of Human Services in accordance with the "State Agency Transfer Act," P.L.1971, c. 375 (C. 52:14D-1 et seq.).